Australian Bureau of Statistics

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Slowing growth in filled jobs

The total number of filled jobs in Australia grew slowly in the March quarter 2019, according to new figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Filled jobs (that is, jobs with a person in them) increased by around 0.2 per cent in the quarter, and 2.8 per cent over the year, in seasonally adjusted terms.

“This slowing growth in jobs echoes the weaker growth in employment that we have been observing since September 2018,” said Bruce Hockman, Chief Economist at the ABS.

“The change in filled jobs partly reflected a drop in secondary jobs for the first time in over a year, down by 3.8 per cent in the quarter,” said Mr Hockman. “In contrast, jobs worked as a main job increased in the quarter, up by 0.5 per cent.”

“Overall, growth in filled jobs has been generally trending down since the recent high in mid-2017, when the quarterly growth was around 1 per cent,” Mr Hockman said.

Health care and social assistance was the industry with the most jobs (13.2 per cent of all jobs) in March 2019, followed by retail trade (9.7 per cent). Over the past twelve months, the professional, scientific and technical services industry saw the largest growth in the number of filled jobs (up 10.1 per cent).

“The number of filled jobs in manufacturing has declined by around 20,000 jobs in the past five years - from around 900,000 jobs in March 2014, to around 880,000 in March 2019,” said Mr Hockman. Despite this decrease, the manufacturing industry accounts for more than 6 per cent (or a little over 1 in 20) of all filled jobs in Australia.

The ABS has introduced a new measure of met and unmet demand in the labour market - the proportion of vacant jobs. This measure, which highlights the proportion of jobs that are vacant, remained steady at 1.7 per cent in March 2019, reflecting slowing growth in job vacancies. This measure has remained at 1.7 per cent for the past four quarters, following sustained increases over the preceding four years.

The Labour Account is the best source of headline information on employment by industry. The Labour Account has been specifically designed to produce industry estimates that present the most coherent picture of the Australian labour market.

Further details can be found in Labour Account Australia, Quarterly Experimental Estimates (cat. no. 6150.0.55.003). These are available for free download from www.abs.gov.au.

Media note:

- The Australian Labour Account complements other ABS measures to build a more comprehensive picture of the labour market. Labour Account data provides the number of filled jobs at a point-in-time each quarter, while the Jobs in Australia data provides insights into all jobs held throughout the year, and Labour Force Survey data measures the number of people employed each month.
- When reporting ABS data, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (or ABS) must be attributed as the source.
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- A glossary of terms used in this media releases is available with the publication.

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